

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 01943 121814Z

67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 CEQ-02 COA-02 EB-11 COME-00 EPA-04

FEA-02 SCI-06 IO-14 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 NEA-11 DRC-01

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R 121751Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7927

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, UK

SUBJ: CONVENTION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND FOR
OIL POLLUTION DAMAGE

REF: LONDON A-1454, DECEMBER 17, 1973

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH DEPT. OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
REP (WHITAKER) FEB. 12, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE
MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL (REFAIR), WHICH INCLUDED
PROVISIONS TO GIVE EFFECT TO AND IMPLEMENT THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR COMPENSATION FOR OIL POLLUTION
DAMAGE, IS NOW DEAD IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT PARLIAMENT
HAS BEEN DISSOLVED IN PREPARATION FOR THE UK ELECTIONS.
AFTER THE NEW PARLIAMENT IS OPENED (MARCH 12), THE
BILL WILL HAVE TO BE REINTRODUCED. THIS WILL MOST LIKELY
RESULT IN A DELAY IN THE ENACTMENT OF THE PROPOSED
LEGISLATION. IF THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT IS
RETURNED TO POWER, THE DELAY COULD BE RELATIVELY
SHORT (PERHAPS EVEN ALLOWING THE LEGISLATION TO
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PAGE 02 LONDON 01943 121814Z

TAKE FORCE NEAR THE PREVIOUS TARGET DATE OF MID-MAY

OR EARLY JUNE 1974. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF A NEW GOVERNMENT IS ELECTED, A POLICY DECISION BY IT TO PROCEED WITH THE MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL OR SOME MODIFICATION OF IT COULD TAKE CONSIDERABLY LONGER THUS DEFERRING THE TIME WHEN THE UK COULD RATIFY THE FUND CONVENTION.

2. WHITAKER ALSO REFERRED TO A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT AMONG SEVERAL STATES THAT THE FUND CONVENTION SHOULD BE : BROUGHT INTO FORCE IN 1974. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, HE NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO UK RATIFICATION, RATIFICATION BY THE /US WOULD ALSO BE NEEDED TO FULFILL THE TONNAGE PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION. HE SAID THAT IT IS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (FRG) IS NOT LIKELY TO RATIFY THE FUND CONVENTION BEFORE THE LATTER PART OF 1974; THE ITALIANS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BE IN A POSITION TO RATIFY ANY EARLIER THAN THE FRG AND THE STATUS OF JAPANESE PREPARATIONS FOR RATIFICATION IS UNKNOWN.

3. WHITAKER ASKED TO BE INFORMED OF THE STATUS OF US ARRANGEMENTS TO RATIFY THE FUND CONVENTION AND WHETHER OR NOT DRAFT LEGISLATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS. HE SUGGESTED THAT, IN VIEW OF THE POSITION OF THE UK AND OTHER MAJOR STATES NOTED IN PARA (2) ABOVE, IT MIGHT NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO REVISE THE TARGET DATE FOR THE CONVENTION'S COMING INTO FORCE FROM JULY 1, 1974 TO OCTOBER 1.

4. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING STATUS REPORT ON US STEPS TO RATIFY THE FUND CONVENTION AND ANY COMMENT ON NEW TARGET DATE WHITAKER MENTIONED.

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